

The Ripline

www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Union/BUHABS

Issue 2 2002/2003

Newsletter of the BRISTOL UNIVERSITY HOT AIR BALLOONING SOCIETY

Hi and welcome to Issue 2 of our fabulous newsletter! We've got the second exciting installment of the BUHABS Fiesta adventures from August, news from the first social, and advance warning of the next social, Indoor Ballooning!

We've had some lovely flights in the first couple of weekends of term. We know how frustrating it is when you phone in and we tell you we've had to cancel due to weather. Some of you have been unlucky, but keep signing up and you'll get to fly lots. The only way you won't fly is if you don't sign-up a few times! Don't assume that as winter approaches we'll stop flying either - some of the nicest flights we do are when there's frost on the ground!

Hugo and Ellie

Socials!



A load of keen people turned up to the first social of the year, and were relieved to find out the BUHABS initiation is nowhere near as bad as the Rugby club or Vet School one! In fact various members of the committee got progressively more drunk, with everyone else joining in to a greater or lesser extent! We started off in Café Zuma and the Epi, making the most of the free Guinness promotions, giving people lots of ballooning info and signing up several new members, at least one of whom has already flown! Some of us then moved on down Park Street, ending up at Brasserie Pierre, a BUHABS favourite watering hole. Finally a visit to the Hot Spot Take-Away on Whiteladies for those hardy enough. Well done to Will Pyatt who lasted right to the end! (and who demonstrated some awesome tricks with pink knickers!)

Indoor ballooning and slideshow.

Thursday November 14th, 8pm in the Anson room.

Our next social is very bizarre, but great fun! We take the Anson room (the concert venue room on the 1st floor of the union), and lay out our balloon inside it! It'll give those of you who've been unlucky with the weather to get a sense of the size of it. As normal we'll be having a few drinks, we should have some slides of classic BUHABS exploits, and possibly a few other surprises! Come along and feel free to bring a friend or three if they're feeling lonely. There's no obligation to join, but if they want to all the better!



CHRISTMAS MEAL/PARTY - Will be a great night during the last week of term - Watch this space for details.



From the logbook, flights this year so far.....

Sunday 6/10 - Horsley (near Stroud) to Dursley,

Tim and Ellie flew John Young, Will Pyatt and Alice Maitland, John Dawson drove the retrieve with Sam Lockhart Smith and Sarah Taylor. Flight time 1 hour 5 minutes.

Saturday 19/10 Ashton Court to nr. Pucklechurch, right across Bristol on a beautiful morning!

Tim and Ellie flew Charlotte Day, Philippa Welsh and Nicola, Josie Church drove the retrieve with Hugo. Flight time 1 hour 20 minutes.

Saturday 19/10 Ashton Court to nr. Yate, right across Bristol on a beautiful afternoon!

Tim and Ellie flew Liz Higham, Catherine Sheppard and Phil Semple, Rachel Harrington drove the retrieve with Dorette Morgan and Katy Elliott. Flight time 1 hour 45 minutes.

Sign-up and Call-in reminder

Please let us know any change of address so your Riplines don't go astray! You should be getting e-mails from us about every week—if you're not please e-mail Hugo

with your e-mail address so we can update the members e-mail list!

- **By Thursday Morning.** We will send an e-mail round to let you know what slots are being offered, who will be in the White Bear Pub on Thursday lunchtime, and their phone number.
- **Thursday 1.10pm to 1.45pm (lunchtime).** You can come and sign up in the pub. **THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO SIGN UP.** Alternatively you can ring one of the people in the pub on their mobile and we'll give you the call in details for your chosen slot.
- **Thursday 1.50pm - Friday at 1.15pm.** The list will then go up on the Physics noticeboard.
- **If you call us at any other time.** We'll put you on the list if there are spaces after it has come down from physics, except:
- **If you live/work outside the Uni area and cannot ring us at lunchtime.** You should give me a ring sometime and I'll sort out a special plan for you, usually this will mean ringing Ellie or I on Wednesday evening to request a slot.
- **On the day of the flight.** Call pilot at noted time. **YOU MUST CALL IN WHATEVER THE WEATHER.** If you find beforehand that you can't make it for a genuine reason (illness etc.) PLEASE contact the pilot or any committee member by phone beforehand so we can offer you're slot to somebody else. It takes a minimum number of people to crew the balloon, so people who don't call in risk us having to cancel a flight—VERY irritating for everyone, especially those who we had to turn away because the slots were full.

Full details, information and a map can be found in the "Flying Guide" section of the first Ripline.

Dear Aunty BUHABS.....

I'm having a terrible problem and I need your advice, the thing is I want to know under what circumstances is it appropriate to enter a Sensitive Area? Are there any special precautions that should be taken before entering? Do you need permission to enter and are all Sensitive Areas the same size?

The correct procedures for entering a Sensitive Area are relatively simple, and yet many more inexperienced pilots can find it difficult to master. All Sensitive Areas have an altitude restriction, the rule is never to enter a Sensitive Area too low. Be aware that some Sensitive Areas are only active at certain times, this often applies to birds. Broadly speaking, if there were grounds for classifying a region as a Sensitive Area in the first place, no amount of pleading will allow you to enter the Sensitive Area if the landowner is unwilling. Most Sensitive Areas are a standard size, although there are some unusual exceptions. The basic rule is if in doubt, stay high and use whispers only to avoid upsetting livestock.

Correction!

Gremlins attacked the first issue of the Ripline and pinched the last digit from my mobile number! Should any of you ever need it the correct number is:

Hugo -

Your Lovely Committee:

Hugo - President
 Ellie - Secretary and Trainee Pilot (PUT)
 Nicola - Treasurer
 Phil - Website
 Simon C. - Transport
 Paul - Senior Pilot
 Lee - Pilot
 Tim - Pilot
 Simon J. - Pilot

BUHABS Fiesta Adventures Part 2.

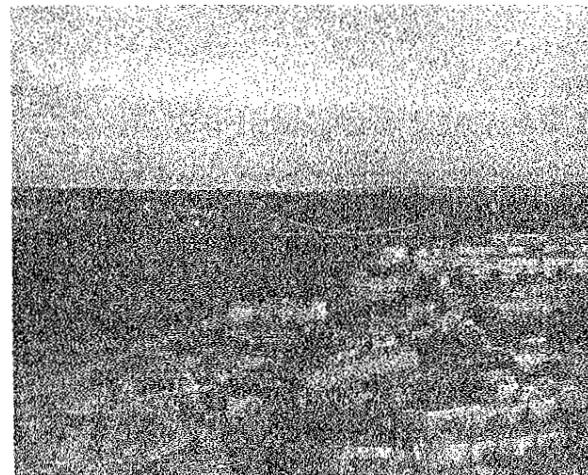
Another early start on Sunday 11th August for team BUHABS. Tim flew Sylwia, Sitas and Dave. Rachel, Simon J and Nicola crewed the retrieve.

"Meet at five o'clock," Simon said. (On a *Sunday morning*??!) I realized as I was driving to Queen's Road that the people I saw out and about at that time of day were not fellow early risers, but late night revellers, returning home from the clubs. (One girl fell down as she wished me 'Good morning,' but I think that was a result of alcohol rather than my presence.)

It was still pitch-dark when we arrived at



Ashton Court, but with the promise of a beautiful sunrise. We staked our claim on our chosen patch of turf, set out the envelope and then waited for the briefing session. A front moving in from the west threatened to scupper the whole proceedings if we did not get off the ground by about seven o'clock, so – to the delight of the assembling crowd – it was action

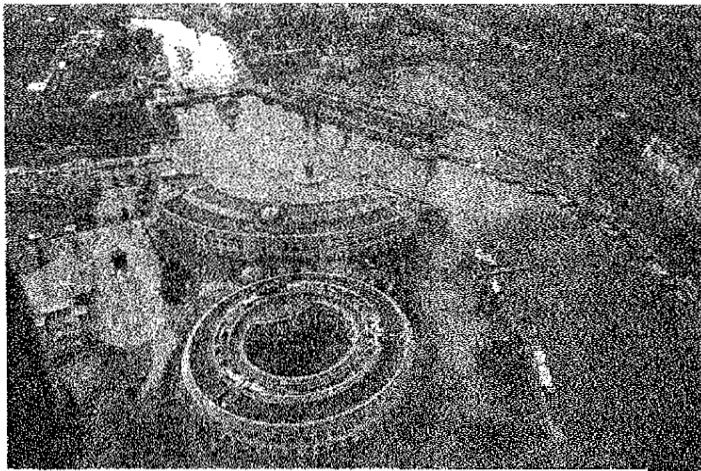


stations as 100 balloons vied with each other for air space above Ashton Court.

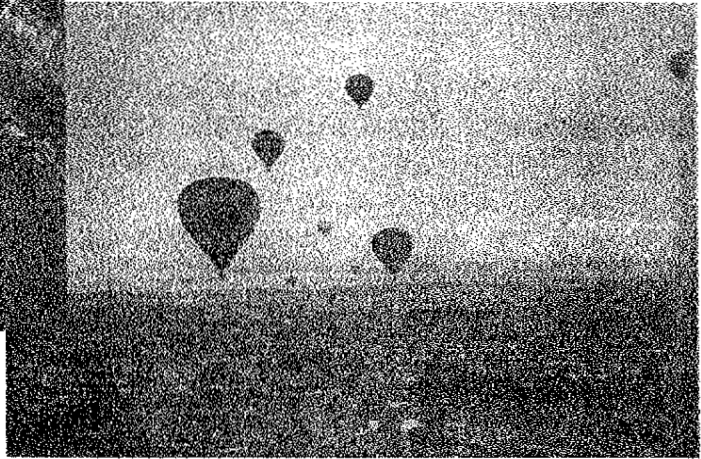
Half the balloons had gone up but it was still dark when we took off. As the sun rose, the westerly wind took us directly over the floating harbour, with spectacular views of Clifton and the suspension bridge, and we



floated directly over *SS Great Britain* and the *Matthew*. Park Street and the Centre were deserted, and St Mary Redcliffe Church serene and dignified. We travelled on over St George and Kingswood, passed over the ring road, and landed gently in a field between Syston and Shortwood, to the west of Kingswood. The van was already there, so it was pack up, give the



landowner his whisky, and drive back to Ashton Court for breakfast! I felt I'd already done a full day's work, but it was still only 10:30 am!



It was my first flight with BUHABS, and I couldn't have wished for a better trip. I had seen the Balloon Fiesta in previous years, but never dreamt I would be on one of them. Please see the photos (In all the glory of full colour—Ed.) I took on the BUHABS web site:

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Union/BUHABS/galleries/7/index.htm>.

Dave Shatford

Book review - War of the Aeronauts

Ballooning nowadays is a leisure activity, and we love flying enough to get up at some unearthly hour in the morning to go flying. Hot-Air Ballooning was first pioneered in France by the Montgolfier brothers in 1783, but back then, there were no pressurised fuel systems and burners, the hot gas being provided by what was essentially a giant bonfire. Unfortunately the fireproof fabrics we now have were also unheard of, so the whole activity was rather risky, early balloons were therefore generally filled with a low-density gas such as hydrogen or coal gas.

The book follows the exploits of an almost forgotten pioneer, Thaddeus Lowe. Between 1861 and 1863 Lowe ran the Union Army Balloon Corps, filling balloons with hydrogen gas, and observing the movements of the Confederate army from the air at several key battles during the American Civil War.

The amazing aerial views of Bristol and the surrounding countryside we get from the balloon (see article in this issue from the Bristol Fiesta) are one of the key attractions of ballooning. The beauty of the earth seen from the basket of a balloon is why we're always so keen to go flying! It takes little imagination to think of the military value of that kind a reconnaissance in the days before spy-planes or satellites!

Lowe managed to achieve some amazing landmarks. The first electronic air to ground communication was a telegraph sent from the basket of one of his balloons. He effectively built the first aircraft carrier by converting a coal barge to carry his balloon. After his Civil War service he even built several novelty shape balloons in the shape of humans and animals. This is over 100 years before the modern "special shape" trend took hold.

The book is really carefully researched and referenced excellently. I have very limited knowledge of American Civil War history, but I was able to follow the historical background. The book is a complete and academic account, but certainly readable and very entertaining in places. There are lots of period photographs and a few good maps. Its certainly more textbook than novel though.

Evans, Charles M., War of the Aeronauts: A History of Ballooning in the Civil War, Stackpole Books, ISBN 0-8177-1395-4